THE SCHOLARLY ORIGIN OF THE ELIZABETHAN REVIVAL

A Chapter of

THE ELIZABETHAN REVIVAL: ITS BACKGROUND AND BEGINNING

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY IN CONFORMITY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1937

BY

EARL REEVES WASSERMAN

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THESIS SUMMARY

This thesis was undertaken to investigate Charles Lamb's traditional importance in reviving an interest in Elizabethan literature; but with the revelation of earlier efforts at revival, a study of the neo-classic attitude toward and treatment of this literature and an investigation of the interest in the second half of the eighteenth century became necessary. The following conclusions were reached:

1. Elizabethan literature was not completely forgotten during the commonwealth period, for the lyrics continued to be enjoyed until the first few decades of the eighteenth century and the drama remained alive in the practical interests of the neo-classic dramatists. The vast majority of the neo-classic reading public and most of the authors and critics were acquainted with extremely little Elizabethan literature and understood very imperfectly the little they read.

2. The Augustan critics condemned the Elizabethans on almost all possible neo-classic critical grounds but actually had a sincere respect for the Elizabethan strength of imagination. Moreover, the condemnation was usually founded, not on a wide and intelligent reading of the material involved, but on traditional, *a priori* objections.

3. The lack of an historical approach, the desire for modernity, and the force of neo-classic doctrines led the Augustans to look upon Elizabethan products from a contemporary point of view and to condemn or praise them accordingly. This type of criticism also found expression in the " improvements " of Elizabethan plays and in the many extensive modernizations and " neo-classicizings " in republished Elizabethan works such as the 1749 edition of Fairfax's *Tasso*; it is this tradition that the editions of Shakespeare by Rowe, Pope, and Haumer should be treated.

4. The efforts of scholars, such as William Oldys, before the middle of the eighteenth century were ineffective in creating an immediate popular interest in Elizabethan literature.

5. The origin of the Revival lies in the development of English scholarship from Theobald to Warton. The development

and effect of this stage of the Revival is treated in the chapter printed herein.

6. There is sufficient evidence that the Elizabethan Revival was well under way by 1790 and that it had been rapidly developing and expanding since about 1760. Centering about the Warton-Johnson-Garrick group were a number of scholars and literary figures, such as Bishop Percy, Tom Davies, Henry Headley, Thomas Hawkins, Lord Woodhouselee, and Francis Godolphin Waldron, who derived their interest in Elizabethan literature from their leaders and the earlier scholars and began editing and popularizing this literature during these three decades. Charles Lamb cannot, therefore, be accredited with instituting the Revival but must be considered as a much later manifestation of the movement. It cannot be denied that Lamb was a considerable factor in the Revival, for he brought to his task a completely enamored mind, free from all scholarly trivialities, and directed the stream of the movement into an important channel consisting of the influential Romantic figures. But Lamb's own interests, which were concentrated largely on the drama of the Renaissance, were the outgrowth of the eighteenth-century awakening to the value of Elizabethan literature; and continuing alongside his own efforts were the activities of such scholars and enthusiast as Sir Egerton Brydges, Thomas Park, John Haslewood, Octavius Gilchrist, Samuel W. Singer, and Charles Cowden Clarke, who, like their predecessors of the former generation, were creating and supplying a popular demand for the literature of the age of Elizabeth.

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THE SCHOLARLY ORIGIN OF THE ELIZABETHAN REVIVAL

By Earl Reeves Wasserman

Although it has long been realized that the English revival of early native, Celtic, and Scandinavian literatures began in the midst of neo-classicism, it has become customary to ascribe to the early nineteenth century the reawakened interest in the minor Elizabethans and to accredit Charles Lamb with first attracting attention to this field.[1] Such a view, however, overlooks two factors which, had they not been removed by the efforts of earlier scholars, would have seriously impeded the renewed appreciation for the literature of the English Renaissance: the disfavor and the neglect into which the Elizabethans had fallen. Through their formalism, the neo-classicists believed they had discovered the means to literary perfection, and they could, therefore, consider most preceding native literature as only barbarous and uncouth. They were convinced, usually with little or no investigation, that the Age of Elizabeth was, because of its lack of refinement and sophistication, an era unfavorable for the arts. The following judgment is typical:

> Yet, You great Judges, sometimes wink at Crimes,
> Most were not his [Shakespeare's], but Errors of the Times.[2]

[1] Lamb himself created the impression that he had inaugurated the Revival, when he described himself in his "Autobiography" as "the first to draw the public attention to the old English Dramatists in a work called *Specimens of English Dramatic Writers who lived about the Time of Shakespeare*" (*Works,* ed. Lucas, I. 320). Since then, many scholars have taken the same view. Edmund Blunden, for example, has granted that some progress was made by the eighteenth-century scholars, of whom he writes, "The antiquary's spectacles and snuff-box lay on the pages they so gravely reprinted," but has dated the Revival from Lamb (*Charles Lamb and his Contemporaries,* Cambridge, 1933, pp. 86-7). Professor C. H. Herford helped further the Lamb legend when he claimed that "Lamb and Coleridge were the pioneers" in "the eager study of the Elizabethans" (*The Age of Wordsworth,* London, 1925, p. xxiv). And Frederick Pierce, in one of the few studies of the Elizabethan Revival, has also disregarded eighteenth-century efforts. "It remained for the early nineteenth century," he wrote, "to resurrect forgotten masterpieces of [Shakespeare's] humbler brethren" (*Currents and Eddies in the English Romantic Generation,* New Haven, 1916, p. 186).

[2] George Sewell, "Prologue . . . to the Revival of the Second Part of King Henry IV . . .," in *The Grove,* London, 1721, p. 152.

Likewise, Gildon wrote that he "must always think [Shakespeare] a Miracle, for the Age he liv'd in."[3] Even the instinctive respect the neo-classicists had for the Elizabethan creative imagination could not outweigh their critical objections.[4] On the other hand, the Augustans knew, even by name alone, amazingly few of the Elizabethans and understood but imperfectly the little they read. Many instances of this neglect of their predecessors are well known: Dryden's ignorance of pre-Shakespearean drama, Bishop Atterbury's confessed inability to understand Shakespeare,[5] and Quin's failure to recognize the Elizabethan text of Shakespeare after having long acted in an adapted version.[6] But even such figures as Defoe, Swift, and Fielding, and, later in the century, William Cowper reveal a remarkably limited knowledge of the Elizabethans;[7] and in this neglect of earlier literature they were typical of their age.

In view of these obstacles, it seems unlikely that one individual could create the enthusiasm that greeted Elizabethan

[3] "An Essay on the . . . Stage, etc.," in *The Works of Shakespeare,* London, 1710. 7. iv.

[4] The neo-classic attack on the Elizabethans was based on many counts: absence of gentility; lack of regularity and conscious, simple form; use of the highly fanciful and the frequent absence of analyzable motivation; pedantry and over-intellectualism, conceits and puns; frequent prosodic irregularity—that is, the use of run-over lines, complex rhyme-schemes, variations of metre, luxurious verbal prolixity, and clash between rhyme and sense-pauses; and employment of vague, bombastic, over-connotative, or ill-bred diction.

[5] "I protest Aeschylus does not want a comment to me more than he [Shakespeare] does" (Pope, *Works* 9. 26).

[6] Tom Davies, *Life of Garrick,* London, 1780, 1. 117.

[7] In all his works, Defoe makes no mention of any authors between Chaucer and Withers, except Shakespeare and Jonson. Swift evidently knew of Alexander, Drummond, and Davies, but he mentions no other Elizabethan poet. Of the dramatists he knew Jonson and Shakespeare; but even in the case of the latter he revealed amazing ignorance: "I have heard of the Wife of Bath, I think in Shakespeare" (Pope, *Works,* 7. 167). Fielding betrayed himself when, in his *Tom Thumb,* he attacked Tate's *Injur'd Love,* for all of the five quotations he selected for ridicule were, almost word for word, from Webster's *White Devil,* on which Tate had founded his play. Cowper, although in the process of editing Milton, did not know Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess* in 1792, when the Revival was well under way. A month later he confessed to Thomas Park that he was unacquainted with Drummond. Finally, although he had published a translation of Homer in 1791, he wrote Park in 1793 that he had never seen Chapman's version and added dubiously, "He cannot surely be the same Chapman who wrote a poem, I think on the battle of Hochstadt" [i. e., Blenheim, which took place in 1704] (Letter to Park, May 17, 1793).

literature in the early nineteenth century, and we must look instead for a slowly widening pre-Lamb development of interest and acquaintance. The purpose of this article is, therefore, to trace the growing knowledge of and appreciation for Elizabethan literature as they appear in the works of the scholars from Theobald, with whom the minor Elizabethans first came to scholarly attention, to Warton, with whom the Elizabethan Revival began to take root as a popular movement. Before Elizabethan literature could again become an active force, initial spade-work was necessary to recover the minor figures from obscurity; and then a sympathetic approach, possible only through recreating the temper for which, and the conventions by which, the literature was written, was needed to overcome the antipathy of neo-classic formalism. It was in the last half of the eighteenth century that the Revival truly began, and the preceding scholars who first called attention to this material must receive a large share of credit for the movement. The first seeds of the Revival were sown when these scholars inaugurated a sound method of English scholarship, and the movement remained, even well into the nineteenth century, a scholarly one, reaching the general public, as with Lamb's *Specimens*, only at scattered points. Moreover, it was not an individual movement but a part of a much larger development that took place after the mid-century—the general expansion in historical information about English literature; and it was, therefore, but a companion to the Mediaeval, Ballad, Celtic, and Scandinavian Revivals, developing, however, more slowly and receiving less popular attention.

If the Revival, then, is to be traced to any one factor, it is to the transference of the method employed in editing classical texts to the editing of the English classics. The modern scholarly method, Professor R. F. Jones has made clear,[8] was established for English literature with the work of Lewis Theobald. After the appearance of Theobald's edition of Shakespeare in 1733, the method usually employed in editing and commenting on English classics involved (1) the collation of texts, and (2)

[8] *Lewis Theobald,* New York, 1919, ch. 7. This excellent book has supplied the present writer with much helpful material.

the explanation of passages and words by comparison with similar passages in the author's works and (3) in the works of his contemporaries. With the first two of these procedures we are concerned only insofar as they helped make Elizabethan literature more understandable, but the last proved vitally important in determining the fate of the Elizabethans. Previous to the eighteenth century classical scholarship had resolved itself into a study of form and subject matter, but Richard Bentley soon focused attention on verbal criticism. His contemporaries were quick to recognize the value of his method, and his success brought scholarship into attention and esteem. Almost all the men who produced scholarly works on the English classics in the second quarter of the century were originally students of the Greeks and Romans; and it soon became evident to them that the older English authors who held the highest ranks in critical calculations had fallen into the same state as the ancient classics: texts were corrupt, conventions had been forgotten, allusions were obscured, and the language was in many cases no longer understood. Consequently, usually with little or no aesthetic appreciation for their secondary material, these scholars set to work on this new scholarly field in the same manner that they, following methods established by Bentley, had previously studied the classics. Whereas "black letter reading" was previously spoken of with anti-intellectual scorn, Thomas and Joseph Warton were soon to defend the forgotten Elizabethans as scholarly material. By 1750 it was possible to claim that

> No sooner therefore were Criticisms wrote on our English poets, but each deep read scholar whose severer studies had made him frown with contempt on Poems and Plays, was taken in to read, to study, to be enamour'd; He rejoiced to try his strength with the editors, and to become a critic himself.[9]

The explanations of conventions, allusions, and diction made Elizabethan literature, if not immediately more reputable, at least more understandable; and the use of the historical method of scholarship—that is, the use of the works of an author's contemporaries for the explanation of meaning, manners, and

[9] *The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher*, London, 1811, 1. lviii.

temper—brought the minor Elizabethans once more into attention, however limited in scope and critically unappreciative this attention may at first have been. The result was that the scholars began to form a close acquaintance with a large body of Elizabethan literature; and in time, as these works were made more understandable, they began to look upon them, no longer as antiquarian tools, but as intrinsically valuable literature. Shakespeare, Jonson, Spenser, and Beaumont and Fletcher had almost always been enjoyed, but they were viewed critically against a background of neo-classic doctrines and had therefore never been appreciated in all details or given the rapturous praise accorded them by the Romanticists until the scholars had first made the older literature intelligible and had trained themselves to see the Elizabethans against an Elizabethan background. Thomas Seward, one of Theobald's assistants on an edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, made clear how, by 1750, a greater appreciation was developing from the scholarly investigations:

> Every good author pleases more, the more he is examined; (hence perhaps that *partiality* of *editors* to their *own authors*; by a more intimate acquaintance, they discover more of their beauties than they do of others) especially when the *stile* and *manner* are quite *old-fashioned*, and the beauties hid under the uncouthness of their dress. The *taste* and *fashion* of poetry varies in every age, and though our old dramatic writers are as preferable to the modern as Vandyke and Rubens to our modern painters, yet most eyes must be accustomed to their *manner* before they can discern their *excellencies*. Thus the very best plays of Shakespeare were forced to be dressed *fashionably* by the poetic *taylors* of the late ages before they could be admitted upon the stage, and a very few years since his *comedies* in general were under the highest contempt. Few, very few durst speak of them with any sort of regard, till the many excellent *criticisms* upon that author made people study him, and some excellent *actors* revived these comedies, which completely opened men's eyes; and it is now become as *fashionable* to admire as it had been to decry them.[10]

Likewise, in 1759, when the scholarly movement was well under way, an anonymous critic wrote:

> Every reader of taste must congratulate the present age, on the spirit which has prevailed of reviving our Old Poets. Within these

[10] *Ibid.*, pp. xxiv-xxv.

few years, Shakespeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Jonson, and Milton have been published with elegance and accuracy. They have been explained from a diligent examination of the writings of their contemporary authors; and in proportion as they have received this rational method of illustration, they have been studied with new pleasure and improvement.[11]

This is excellent evidence of the effect of early scholarship upon critical views. The " writings of . . . contemporary authors " were still considered scholars' reading matter, but at least they were coming into attention; and the major Elizabethans were receiving an understanding appreciation which was the direct consequence of scholarly labors.

Meanwhile, these scholars, through their investigations, were adopting the historical point of view and seeing the Elizabethans through sympathetic, understanding eyes; as a result, neo-classic absolutism was being weakened, and the minor Elizabethans and Elizabethanism were ready to be restored to popular favor. In 1745, Dr. Johnson, who was abreast of and integrally associated with most contemporary movements, realized that although an author is to be judged in terms of his universality, he must first be studied as a product of his age. Investigating the use of the supernatural in *Macbeth*, he finds that although the Augustans reject such childishness, " a survey of the notions that prevailed at the time when this play was written " reveals that the poet was merely employing popular beliefs. Therefore, " In order to make a true estimate of the abilities and merit of a writer, it is always necessary to examine the genius of his age, and the opinions of his contemporaries." [12] In the following year, John Upton urged the critics of Shakespeare to remember

that things are not as we judge of them, but as they exist in their own natures, independent of whim and caprice. So that I except against all such judges, as talk only from common vogue and fashion; " why really 'tis just as people like—we have different tastes now, and things must be accommodated to them." They who are advanced to this pitch of barbarism, have much to unlearn before they can have ears to hear.[13]

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[11] *An Impartial Estimate of the Rev. Mr. Upton's Notes on the Faerie Queene,* London, 1759, p. 1.

[12] *Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth,* London, 1745.

[13] *Critical Observations on Shakespeare,* London, 1746, pp. 344-5.

This argument for the relativity of taste was to characterize most of the scholarly commentaries on the Elizabethans and was to lead to understanding appreciation. No analysis could more clearly indicate how the scholars were recreating for themselves the Elizabethan milieu and consequently stamping with disapproval the process of weighing the Elizabethans in the neo-classic balances. Upton, whose scholarly works evidence his wide reading in the minor Elizabethans, followed his own doctrines, for he viewed through Elizabethan eyes as well as he could Elizabethan manners, ideas, and beliefs. And Johnson not only frequently restated the historical point of view and an insistence upon a study of the minor Elizabethans,[14] but also followed these doctrines as best he could in his edition of Shakespeare. The route of the Revival was circuitous, but, in view of the neglect and critical condemnation that had befallen the Elizabethans, it was the only possible one.

The first step in this process, we have pointed out, was the increasing use of the minor Elizabethans as sources for exegesis of the works of the more famous English Renaissance figures. As early as 1725, George Sewell, the editor of the 1717 edition of Tottell's Miscellany and the 1725 volume of Shakespeare's poems, recognized the need of applying the methods of classical scholarship to the Elizabethan classics;[15] but it was not until Theobald's edition of Shakespeare in 1733 that reference to a poet's contemporaries for explanation and clarification was extensively made. Even then this process developed slowly and uncertainly, mainly because of the classical origin of English scholarship and because of the scholars' earlier preoccupation with the classics. Occasionally this new method was not employed, and far too often the English scholars, such as John Jortin, found in Greek and Latin literature the explanation to passages in the major Elizabethans. This critical interest was

[14] See his letter to T. Warton, July 16, 1754; *Proposals* for the Shakespeare (1756); and Preface to the Shakespeare (1765).

[15] "What then has been done by the really learned to the dead languages, by treading backward into the Paths of Antiquity and reviving and correcting good old Authors, we in Justice owe to our great Writers, both in Prose and Poetry. They are in some degree our Classics" (*The Works of Shakespeare*, London, 1725. 7. viii. It should be noted that Sewell was very intimate with Theobald and probably borrowed this idea from him.

likewise the defect of Upton's *Critical Observations on Shakespeare* and his edition of *The Faerie Queene*.[16] Even Theobald's *Shakespeare Restor'd* (1726) suffers from this affliction, and in his edition of Shakespeare we frequently meet such notes as: "The Allusion is, unquestionably, to this Passage in *Ovid*" or "The foundation of both Passages may possibly have been of Classical Extraction."[17] Almost every editor and commentator before Farmer was anxious to prove that his author had imitated the best of all possible models—the ancients; and the neo-classicists' inability to free themselves from the classics and to believe that good literature could be written without the assistance of them slackened the immediate progress of the Revival.

Though Theobald evidently knew little Elizabethan literature when he prepared his *Shakespeare Restor'd*, the years between 1726 and 1733 were marked by a surprising expansion in his reading. Many of the ideas he expressed in the earlier volume were modified and altered by his discovery of Elizabethan parallels and sources; it is evident not only from his results but also from his direct statements that he was following the scholarly methods established by Bentley for the classics.[18] But this method depends upon a wide understanding of the author's times and of his contemporaries, and in this respect Theobald was determined not to be behind his master. "Shakespeare's Case" he finds,

> has in a great Measure resembled That of a corrupt *Classic*; and, consequently, the Method of Cure was likewise to bear a Resemblance. . . . The English, from the Happiness of a free Constitution, and a Turn of Mind peculiarly speculative and inquisitive, are observ'd to produce more *Humourists* and a greater Variety of Original *Characters*, than any other People whatsoever: And These owing their immediate Birth to the peculiar Genius of each Age, an infinite Number of Things alluded to, glanced at, and expos'd, must needs become obscure, as the *Characters* themselves are antiquated, and disused. An Editor therefore should be well

[16] "If we have been somewhat prolix in vindicating our author," he writes after listing a series of parallels between Spenser and the Greek and Latin poets, "'tis to show how classical he is in his manner of expressing himself, even where he is thought to be faulty" (*The Faerie Queene*, ed. John Upton, London, 1758. 2. 660).

[17] *Works of Shakespeare*, London, 1733. 3. 116 n; 7. 289 n.

[18] See R. F. Jones, *op. cit.*, ch. 3.

vers'd in the History and Manners of his Author's Age, if he aims at doing him a Service in this Respect.[19]

Many later editors and commentators have laid claim to, and been given credit for, the discovery of the historical method, but it originated with Theobald and in many cases was derived from him. Elizabethan material was undoubtedly difficult to obtain, and we must not, therefore, think slightingly of his acquisitions, for he seems to have searched diligently and consistently. In his eagerness to show himself fitted to carry out his scholarly methods, he claimed to have made use of " above 800 old *English* Plays," exclusive of Jonson's and Beaumont and Fletcher's, " to ascertain the obsolete and uncommon Phrases " in Shakespeare.[20] This obvious exaggeration was removed in the second edition, but all evidence indicates that his personal library of old books was unusually large for that time.[21] Even the notes in his edition make clear the extent of his reading, for he refers there to many glossaries, Hall, Stow, Holingshed, Camden, Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, and North's Plutarch, to almost all the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher and Jonson, Jonson's poems and *Discoveries*, Spenser, Shakespeare's poems (including the spurious ones contained in the 1725 volume), Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*, Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra*, John Day's *Law-Tricks*, *Soliman and Perseda*, Harrington's translation of Ariosto, Lodge's works, Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, Greene's *Dorastus and Fawnia*, *The Merry Milk-Maids*, Ford's *Love's Sacrifice*, *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, *Westward-Hoe*, Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, *Apollo Shroving*, the English translation of Plautus (1515), *The Whole Contention Betwixt the Two Houses of York and Lancaster*, *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, the pseudo-Shakespearian *Locrine*, *The True Chronicle History of King Leir*, the English translation of Seneca (1581), *Three Sieges of Troy*, printed by Wynken de Worde, Caxton's *Destruction of Troy*, Surrey's poems, and Lady Elizabeth Carew's *Mariam, the Fair Queen of Jewry*; and in his preface Theobald reveals a knowledge—not unusual in his age—of

[19] *Works of Shakespeare* 1. xlv-xlvi. [20] *Ibid.* 1. lxviii.
[21] See Lounsbury, *Text of Shakespeare*, New York, 1908, pp. 551-3.

Chapman's Homer. Moreover, he seems to have known many Renaissance and Mediaeval works of which he makes no direct mention, as for example in his analysis of the extensive use of the dumb-show in the pre-Shakespearian plays [22] and in his frequent discussions of the Vice and the Fool.[23] So comprehensive a knowledge of the Elizabethans was without precedent in the century. Theobald's historical investigations were likewise extensive, and his wide reading was giving him an understanding of Elizabethan dramatic conventions. In this manner he was making the Revival possible, for he was making the literature intelligible. The question of Shakespeare's learning was still warmly debated, and Theobald, although wavering, was not yet able to give up the belief that perhaps Shakespeare was well read in the classics. His discovery of many native sources for the plays and of many Elizabethan translations of the classics weakened his belief considerably, and he was usually cautious to leave the possibility of doubt whenever he suggested a classical source; but Warburton undoubtedly prevented him from entirely giving up the belief in classical influence, and for that reason he did not look solely for Elizabethan sources and parallels. However, the acquisitions he made in Elizabethan learning were, through the advances of successive scholars, to lead to critical appreciation of, and renewed interest in, the entire body of Elizabethan literature.

Despite his wide reading in the Elizabethans, Theobald did not alter his critical attitude toward his secondary sources. In his preface he wrote of the then "reigning Barbarism," and his opinion of the age remained constant.[24] But Theobald was learning to appreciate other matters. He wrote a defense of Shakespeare's unity of time, insisting, much as Coleridge did later, that the spectator is perfectly willing to suppose a great lapse of time between acts.[25] He was, indeed, laying the basis for historical criticism and frequently abandoning absolute and

[22] *Works of Shakespeare* 4. 20 n.

[23] E. g.: "There was hardly an old Play, till the Period of the *Reformation*, which had not in it a *Devil*, and a drole Character, a Jester" (*Ibid.*, pp. 446-7 n.).

[24] *Promos and Cassandra* he calls "execrable mean Stuff"; *Soliman and Perseda*, "an execrable bad" play; *The Spanish Tragedy*, "a fustian old Play"; *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, "an old Motley Interlude"; and he writes scornfully of *The True Chronicle History of King Leir*.

[25] *Op. cit.* 4. 18 n.

universal standards as a result of his more Elizabethan perspective. He frequently attacked, for example, Pope's regularizing of Shakespeare's text: "Where-ever the Author's Sense is clear and discoverable, (tho', perchance, low and trivial;) I have not by any Innovation tamper'd with his Text; out of an Ostentation of endeavouring to make him speak better than the old Copies have done." [26] If this passage does not indicate a greater appreciation of the Elizabethan manner, at least it offers a protest against the modernizations that are typical of the neo-classic treatment of Elizabethan texts.[27]

We have seen that Theobald outlined the historical method of scholarship; and, although he never made any doctrinization of it, he was frequently led into the use of the historical point of view, that is, the criticism of a work by the time for which, and the contentions by which, it was written, the realization of the relativity of taste. Perhaps his most striking use of this critical attitude is his reply to Rymer's scornful attack on "the Tragedy of the Handkerchief." His answer is dependent upon his antiquarian learning, and under these circumstances the maxim *Tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner* tends to become true; for as scholars became more widely read, they began to hold more tolerant ideas of the older literature and then were led into sincere appreciation. To Rymer's bantering objection that a handkerchief is too menial an object to motivate the tragedy in *Othello*, Theobald replied:

> But our Author, who wrote in a superstitious Age, (when *Philtres* were in Vogue for procuring Love, and *Amulets* for preserving it;) makes his Handkerchief deriv'd from an Inchantress; *Magick* and *Mystery* are in its *Materials* and *Workmanship*; its *Qualities* and *Attributes* are solemnly laid down; and the Gift recommended to be cherish'd by its Owners on the most inducing Terms imaginable, *viz.* the making the Party amiable to her Husband, and the keeping his Affections steady. Such Circumstances, if I know any thing of the Matter, are the very Soul and Essence of Poetry.[28]

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[26] *Ibid.* 1. xliii.

[27] In his notes Theobald was even more specific and opposed Pope's alterations and omissions as a false purity of taste: "I could produce at least two thousand of our Poet's Verses, that would be disturb'd by this modern, unreasonable, Chastness of *Metre*" (*Ibid.* 5. 57 n.).

[28] *Ibid.* 7. 447 n.

Here, more than twenty years before Warton's pronouncement of the idea, is the scholarly application of the historical point of view. Not all that Theobald did was correct, but certainly he was building a new appreciation for and understanding of Shakespeare and bringing into scholarly attention the minor Elizabethans.

The next to employ the historical method of scholarship to a Renaissance work was the antiquarian Francis Peck, whose *New Memoirs of the Life and Poetical Works of Mr. John Milton* appeared in 1740. His Elizabethan learning was not so extensive as Theobald's; but his volume does indicate the further progress of scholarship. He shows a wide acquaintance with Elizabethan customs and beliefs, such as fairy lore and witchcraft, and has much to say about Elizabethan life and practices. It was in this manner that the great Elizabethans, who had been paid more lip-service than attention, were again to be understood and intelligently appreciated. His method and much of his learning he probably derived from Theobald, whose work he mentions frequently.[29] He refers mainly to Shakespeare and Spenser, but he also makes scholarly use of many Elizabethan prose tracts, Holingshed, Stow, Reginald Scot, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, Drayton's *Polyolbion*, Skelton, and Thomas Churchyard.

Four years later, 1744, appeared Zachary Grey's profoundly learned edition of Butler's *Hudibras*. The editor was an intimate friend of Peck and had helped him with his *Desiderata Curiosa*; it was frequently through these personal contacts that the historical method was perpetuated and the knowledge of the minor Elizabethans increased. Grey was a thorough scholar and made himself intimately acquainted with much of the literature that Butler must have known: mid-seventeenth-century poems, sermons, pamphlets, and tracts. But in his search for secondary material, Grey turned also to Elizabethan works, a few of which it might be worth mentioning to indicate how the scholars' knowledge of Elizabethan literature was expanding: among many others are the works of Shakespeare, Jonson, Spenser, Beaumont and Fletcher, Mandeville's *Travels*,

[29] Peck claimed that most of his notes were prepared in 1736, or approximately two years after Theobald's edition appeared.

Purchas his Pilgrimes, Coryat's Crudities, Fairfax's Tasso, Sandys' Ovid, Sylvester's Du Barthas, the works of Donne and John Taylor the Water Poet, Heywood's *Hierarchy of Blessed Angels,* Corbett's poetry, Drayton's *Polyolbion,* and Warner's *Albion's England.* Yet, throughout there is no indication that Grey is critically concerned with his material; his interest is focused on Butler, and these Elizabethan works are merely his scholarly stock-in-trade.

The next important Elizabethan commentary was John Upton's *Critical Observations on Shakespeare,* which appeared in 1746. It will be noticed that with the '40's, scholarly discussions of the better-known Renaissance figures were being produced in rapid succession; in this period English scholarship was rapidly gaining a more reputable status. It was likewise the period of Dodsley's *Collection of Old Plays,* of the revival of Shakespeare's romantic comedies on the stage, and of Garrick's attempts to approximate the original form of Shakespeare's plays. Upton, like Theobald and Peck, had been a classical scholar and was consequently trained in the scholarly method he was to employ. Moreover, his father, James Upton, edited in 1711 Ascham's *Schoolemaster,* and in the notes the son could have found references to many Elizabethans such as Tusser, Puttenham, Wyatt and Surrey, and Richard Mulcaster. The 1746 volume does not, however, show a very wide reading in the Elizabethans; there are all the more usual Elizabethans, such as Spenser, Jonson, and Sidney, and references to the chronicles, Fairfax's Tasso, *Gorboduc, The Spanish Tragedy,* Braithwaite's *English Gentleman,* Gawin Douglas' *Aeneid,* and Ascham's *Schoolemaster.* But although he is hampered by a lack of material and by his classical learning, upon which he is constantly calling to explain Shakespeare, Upton is at least aware of the proper method: the best way to explain an author's meaning is to use the author's works and to employ a

> previous knowledge in ancient customs and manners, in grammar and construction; the knowledge of these is presupposed; to be caught tripping here is an ominous stumble at the very threshold and entrance upon criticism; 'tis ignorance, which no guess-work, no divining faculty, however ingenious, can atone and commute for.[30]

[30] *Critical Observations on Shakespeare,* London, 1746, p. 155.

Two years later, Upton republished his work and added a preface occasioned by the appearance of Warburton's Shakespeare, which makes almost no use of recent scholarly discoveries. Here Upton repeats his scholarly doctrines and mercilessly attacks Warburton for his inattention to Shakespeare's contemporaries.[31] He indicates, moreover, that he is following his own advice and extending his knowledge of the Elizabethans, for in the second edition there are additional references to Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie*, Drayton's "Battle of Agincourt," and Phaer's Virgil.

But it is his new, unorthodox ideas on Elizabethan literature that are of particular importance, for they all point in the direction of Thomas Warton and the later revivers of the Elizabethans. He is perhaps the first critic to speak of the Elizabethan period as one of the greatest English literary epochs and to deflate the reputation of the Augustans for that purpose.

'Twere to be wished, that with our restored king, some of that tast of literature had been restored, which he enjoyed in the days of Queen Elizabeth. But when we brought home our frenchified king, we did then, and have even to this day continued to bring from France our models. . . . Hence every thing, unless of French extraction, appears aukward and antiquated. Our poets write to the humour of the age; and when their own little stock is spent, they set themselves to work on new-modelling Shakespeare's plays, and adapting them to the tast of their audience; by stripping off their antique and proper tragic dress, and by introducing in these mock-tragedies, not only gallantry to women, but an endeavour to raise a serious distress from the disappointment of lovers. . . . In short, they make up a poet of shreds and patches; so that the ancient robe of our tragedian, by this miserable darning, and thread-bare patchwork, resembles the long motley coat of the Fool, in our old plays, introduced to raise the laughter of the spectators. And I am afraid, if the matter was minutely examined into, we should find, that many passages, in some late editions of our poet, have been altered, or added, or lopped off, entirely thro' modern, and French refinement.[32]

Commentators had almost always praised Shakespeare, but

[31] Though Warburton is ignorant of the ancient Greeks, he writes, "yet as an English author is the present subject of criticism, to be knowing in the English language and English authors may be deemed sufficient" (*Ibid.*, 1748 ed., p. xvi).

[32] *Ibid.*, 1746 ed., pp. 15-18.

they had never found him faultless or free from errors that were the product of the barbarity of his age. Upton turns the tables by demanding an appreciation of the original Shakespeare with all his Elizabethan trappings and by opposing the frequent " improving " of the stage and printed versions. Instead of spending his time, as most critics had done, in pointing out Shakespeare's defects, Upton devotes more than half his volume to defending the poet as a dramatic artist—using, to be sure, Aristotle as his guide. Upton likewise works out a rational defense of Shakespeare's metre, making of the irregularities an aspect of the " poet's art " and attacking the alterations that had been made for metrical precision.[33] He had read closely enough to realize that many of the alterations in the modern reprints were made not as emendations, but out of deference to the tastes of the reading public; and at the very beginning of his treatise he draws a parallel between the recent editions of Shakespeare and Bentley's Milton, wherein the emendations were clearly intended as better poetry rather than as Milton's true text. The critic's constant association with Shakespeare and a few of the dramatist's fellow writers was leading him into an appreciative viewpoint that was naturally at variance with neo-classicism. The entire volume, indeed, takes its theme from the following paragraph:

> The misfortune seems to be, that scarcely any one pays a regard to what Shakespeare does *write,* but they are allways guessing at what he *should* write; nor in any other light is he look'd on, than as a poor mechanic; a fellow, 'tis true, of genius, who says, now and then, very good things, but wild and uncultivated; and as one by no means proper company for lords, and ladies, maids of honour, and court-pages, 'till some poet or other, who knows the world better, takes him in hand, and introduces him in this modern dress to *good company*.[34]

In opposing such criticisms as this, which, despite its exaggeration, is essentially true for the first half of the eighteenth century, Upton was laying the basis for a new and fuller appreciation of Shakespeare and, indirectly, of the minor Elizabethans. His sympathetic reading of Shakespeare also led him into an attempt to justify the dramatist by overthrowing the

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 329 ff.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

neo-classic unities, just as Theobald had already been forced to cast aside the unity of time:

> . . . a man cannot easily impose on himself, that what he sees represented in a continued action, at a certain period of time, and in a certain place, should take up several years, and be transacted in several places. But dramatic poetry is the art of imposing; and he is the best poet, who can best impose on his audience; and he is the wisest man, who is easiest imposed on.[35]

And in the same manner he proceeds to dispose of the unity of place. Moreover, Upton shows signs of growing weary of neo-classic gentility and superficial polish. "In Shakespeare," he writes, "you have nothing of what we call gallantry"; and of the lines from Dryden's "Epilogue to the Second Part of the Conquest of Granada" condemning the Elizabethans,

> Our LADIES and our men now speak more wit
> In conversation, than THOSE POETS writ,

he says contemptuously, "Very gallant truly, Mr. Bays!"[36] That Upton should take a favorable attitude toward the Elizabethans was not unnatural; he had become imbued with his material and could therefore look upon it only in a somewhat sympathetic light.

The debate over Shakespeare's learning was still being waged, and, until Farmer's essay, much scholarship was to be spent on the question. Peter Whalley, whose *Enquiry into the Learning of Shakespeare* was published in 1748 though written some time before, was a friend of Grey, who was to assist him in an edition of Jonson, and was later to know intimately Francis Godolphin Waldron, a popularizer of the Elizabethans in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Like his immediate predecessors, Whalley realized that the historical method was necessary for an understanding of Shakespeare and wrote that he

> could not help comparing some Passages [in Shakespeare], with similar ones in the other Dramatic Writers of the same and subsequent Age. I found they mutually borrowed, and reflected Light upon each other; and conspired to set the Manners of the Times in a clearer View, than either of them could have done alone.[37]

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[35] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 75-6.

[37] *An Enquiry into the Learning of Shakespeare*, London, 1748, p. 3.

Two outstanding obstacles, however, hindered his being extensively familiar with Elizabethan literature: his conviction that Shakespeare was far from ignorant of the Greek and Roman classics, and his neo-classic dislike of Elizabethan material. "I could never bring myself to submit to the Drudgery of going through many of our ancient Plays," he has one of his characters say.[38] In spite of this, it is clear that Whalley was acquainted with the Elizabethan sonneteers and knew Bishop Hall's satires, Mandeville's *Travels*, Sidney's *Defense of Poetry* and *Astrophel and Stella*, Lyly's plays and romances, Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, Golding's Ovid and Caesar, Phaer's Virgil, Jasper Heywood's translation of Seneca, and Thomas Tomkis' *Albumazar*. Of Hall, Whalley highly approved, for, as one of the first English satirists, the poet appealed to the critic's neo-classic tastes; but in the other works he found only serious faults.[39] On the other hand, Whalley, in addition to increasing further the stock of known Elizabethans, continued the process of explaining the Elizabethan background and judging Elizabethan literature not entirely by a fixed body of doctrines, but by supplementing these doctrines with a knowledge of the temper of the age for which the literature was written. He does not condone Shakespeare's catering to his age, but he at least indicates that the dramatist must be studied as the product of his age and interpreted critically in the same manner. He notes, for example, the tremendous influence exerted on Elizabethan literature by the Italian tours.[40] Of the Elizabethan interest in the marvelous, though he calls it the result of a "depraved" taste, he has much to say in extenuation:

> A great Part of this unjustifiable Wildness of the Fable, must be placed to the Taste and Humour of the Times; the People had been used to the Marvellous and Surprizing in all their Shews and Sports; they had seen different Kingdoms, in different Quarters of the World, engaged in the same Scene of Business, and could not be hastily confined from so unlimited a Latitude to a narrower Compass.[41]

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[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 41-2.

[39] On Lyly's head he placed much of the blame for the "unnatural and far-fetched Sentiments" which over-ran Elizabethan products; his works "were a perfect Magazine of Affectation and Conceit" (*Ibid.*, p. 38). Kyd's play is "little else but a continued String of Quibbles and Conceits, even in the most passionate and affecting Parts" and contains no more than six good lines (*Ibid.*, pp. 47-8).

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Equally important is Whalley's use, in accordance with his recognition of the relativity of taste, of his knowledge of the Age of Elizabeth to justify passages which offended neo-classic critics. He is not won over to outmoded tastes and conventions, but he realizes that criticism must take account of them. For example, he finds that in recent editions of Shakespeare the passage in which Othello speaks of the Anthropophagi has been excised:

> As repugnant as this [passage] seems to common Sense, if I might ventury to play the Critic, I should probably insert it in its Place again. . . . The Stream of romancing ran high in the Time of *Shakespeare,* occasioned by the imperfect Discoveries which had been lately made in the new World. The Reports of Travellers were seldom attended to, if they contained only such Accidents as might happen to any one without stirring from his Chimney Corner. On this Account a Portion of the Marvellous was thrown in, to excite Attention; and to make themselves appear as fortunate in seeing strange Sights, as others who went in quest of foreign Adventures. Accordingly *Othello* is made to use the Style so much in Vogue.[42]

This may not be full appreciation, but it does constitute clear understanding and breaks the ground for an affection for the marvelous and strange—qualities for which the age was soon to turn to early native literatures as a refreshing change from the common-sense literature of the Augustans.

The following year, 1749, saw Upton's *Remarks on three Plays of Benjamin Johnson,* which—though it does not show any expansion in his reading beyond a few prose pamphlets, a reference to the Vice in the pre-Elizabethan plays, probably borrowed from Theobald's edition, and to the Elizabethan university plays, and the obvious reference to Dekker's *Satiromastix*—does indicate the extension of his scholarly activities and the general widening at that time of scholarly interests in the Elizabethans. Even the forger William Lauder,[43] who was determined by any means to prove Milton an imitator, turned to the Elizabethans for sources, revealing a knowledge of Sylvester's Du Barthas, Turberville's *Eclogues,* Sandys' paraphrase of the psalms, Quarles' *Emblems,* and Heywood's *Hierarchy of*

[42] *Ibid.,* pp. 71-2.

[43] *An Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns,* London, 1750.

Blessed Angels and poem to Henrietta Maria. Elizabethan studies were advancing rapidly, and in the same year, 1750, appeared Thomas Newton's edition of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, in which Newton and his contributor Thyer, to establish sources and explain such matters as pronunciation and meaning, make extensive use of Shakespeare, Spenser, Jonson, Fairfax, Harrington, Bacon, and a few other Elizabethans.

Zachary Grey had meanwhile been rapidly expanding his reading and interests, and in 1754 produced his *Critical, Historical, and Explanatory Notes on Shakespeare*. The learning that he had revealed in his edition of *Hudibras* was exceptional, but the extensive knowledge of Elizabethan literature evident here is even more striking; Grey was rapidly leading in the direction of Richard Farmer's breadth of reading. He made much use of the dramas included in Dodsley's *Old Plays*, but even more did he turn to the Elizabethan volumes themselves. A complete catalogue of the items in Grey's two-volume work will prove clearly the rapidly increasing scholarly use of minor Renaissance literature. Much use is made of prose pamphlets such as *The Travels of Four Englishmen* (1603), of the Elizabethan chronicles, and of voyage literature. There are also the usual references to Sidney, Spenser, Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher. But in addition to these is the use, for explanatory purposes, of *Coryat's Crudities*, Mandeville's *Travels*, *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, Raleigh's *History*, Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, Heywood's *Apology for Actors*, Skelton's poetry, Gawin Douglas' Virgil, the poetry of Taylor the Water Poet, Sandys' Ovid, Churchyard's poetry, Drayton's *Heroical Epistles* and *Barons Wars*, Richard Niccols' *Winter's Nights Vision*, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, *Gorboduc*, Lyly's *Campaspe*, Greene's *George a Greene*, Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, Massinger's *A Very Woman*, *Bashful Lover*, and *The Guardian*, Francis Quarles' *Virgin Widow*, Jasper Mayne's *Amorous Warre*, Richard Broome's *English Moor*, *City Match*, *City Wit*, and *New Academy*, Randolph's *Amyntas* and *Muses Looking-Glass*, Cartwright's *Siege*, *Lady-Errant*, and *The Ordinary*, Shirley's *Court Secret*, *The Brothers*, *The Imposture*, and *The Gentleman of Venice*, Cockayne's *Trappolin*, Barten Holiday's *Marriage of the Arts*, and *Wily Beguil'd*. Yet, Grey is a scholar,

not a critic, and consequently has no comment to make on this material. He seems, indeed, not to have learned to appreciate Elizabethan literature, for he makes the usual neo-classic criticism of the age: Shakespeare's "*jingles*, puns, and *quibbles* . . . were certainly owing to the false taste of the times in which he lived." [44]

At this point it would be well to consider how far the scholarly knowledge of and appreciation for Elizabethan literature had progressed, in order that we might better judge the position and significance of Warton's *Observations on the Faerie Queene* (1754) in the Revival. English scholarship was rapidly becoming a distinguished occupation, and the public was gradually recognizing its value. The next few decades were to witness a series of scholarly editions and commentaries that were the product of an unprecedented ardor in research. To be sure, this scholarship, until after Warton's *Observations*, was limited to the major Elizabethans, but the result was a new appreciation for these figures, and the time was not far distant when the minor Elizabethans were to be dignified in scholarly reprints as a result of an interest growing out of their use as secondary material. By the time it reached Grey's hands, the practice of using Elizabethan material for the understanding of the better-known figures had become well established. Theobald had used and urged the use of the method, and Johnson echoed him; Whalley, Grey, Upton, and others heeded the advice; and in 1751 Upton wrote that "an editor of *Spenser* should be master of Spenser's learning: for otherwise how could he know his allusions and various beauties?" [45] Sympson and Thomas Seward, who completed Theobald's edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, also learned from their master the method to pursue: every editor of Shakespeare must know "every single word, history, custom, trade, &c. that Shakespeare himself knew." [46] Warton has frequently been credited with the institution of this method, but his volume appeared after a long line of development had established the value of the historical method. The use of an author's contemporaries

[44] *Critical, Historical, and Explanatory Notes on Shakespeare,* London, 1754.

[45] *A Letter Concerning a New Edition of Spenser's Faerie Queene. To Gilbert West,* London, 1751, p. 1.

[46] *The Dramatic Works of Beaumont and Fletcher,* London, 1811, 1. 1.

for exegesis had brought the attention of the scholars to many minor Elizabethans who had been almost completely obscured by the unfavorable attitude of the neo-classicists, and the scholars were soon ready to revive these minor figures. But equally important, these antiquarians were undermining, however unintentionally, neo-classic doctrines. These men were not romanticists any more than were their contemporaries, but in their attempts to justify their authors and out of the new understanding of Renaissance literature that their wide reading in major and minor Elizabethans had given them, they were beginning to weaken neo-classic objections to this material. The tendency to explain away the unities is but one instance. The actual appreciation of the elements of Elizabethan literature, it must be confessed, had been sparse and scattered. Of Warton's scholarly predecessors, only Upton can be said to have had a comprehensive appreciation for many of the qualities for which Elizabethan literature stands.

But although the appreciative comments on Elizabethan literature were thinly diffused, these antiquarians were establishing another factor of equal significance. The historical point of view is the recognition that an absolute and objective aesthetics is a falsification of truth, and that many factors, such as the climate in which and the age for which a product is written, must be taken into account in any critical analysis. But it is more than that. This much had already been said by Rowe when he recognized that Shakespeare is not to be tried by doctrines intended for another sort of literature. It had been said of Spenser by Hughes. It had been recorded frequently in the discussions of Shakespeare as an original genius. But these were negative, rather than constructive, pronouncements and therefore told only what attitude to adopt, not how to adopt it. They were the products of professional critics, not scholars. The historical point of view is, more than all this, the projection of oneself into the writer's period and situation. As it had been worded before the scholars took it over, the doctrine stated only that an author is not to be judged by standards formulated for another literature; in the scholars' hands it became an active program that entailed antiquarian research to recreate for the critic the author's surroundings

and circumstances. Statements of the historical point of view had been made frequently by English and Continental writers, but in England it was not until this doctrine became a part of scholarship that it became a continuous, effective movement.

Warton has been credited with being the "founder of a new kind of criticism";[47] and on the other hand, a long series of quotations from French, Italian, and Spanish literatures has been produced as possible sources of Warton's statement of the historical point of view.[48] Either opinion neglects, I believe, the earlier scholars. Warton voices both the negative and positive creeds. The former, "It is absurd to think of judging either Ariosto or Spenser by precepts which they did not attend to," is no more than what had been said by the early defenders of Shakespeare and might well have been derived from foreign or native sources, if indeed a source is required. It is true that the passage in its entirety[49] offers a clearer statement of the relativity of taste and more boldly attacks the doctrine of universality than had been done by the previous scholars. But it is the remainder of the passage, presenting the factual information of which this is only a vague critical induction, that is of greater significance; for Warton here analyzes the Elizabethan delight in "the various and the marvellous," explains the element of chivalry and romance in Elizabethan life and literature, and thus recreates the milieu in which Spenser wrote. Moreover, the point that Warton is constantly underscoring is not merely the necessity of giving Elizabethan literature a critical treatment different from that applied to modern literature, but the actual nature of that treatment and the active program of research necessary for the application of that doctrine:

> In reading the works of an author who lived in a remote age, it is necessary that we should look back upon the customs and manners which prevailed in his age; that we should place ourselves in

[47] Clarissa Rinaker, *Thomas Warton, a Biographical and Critical Study*, p. 43. (Univ. of Illinois Studies in Lang. and Lit. 2. no. 1, Feb., 1916).

[48] Odell Shepard, "Thomas Warton and the Historical Point of View in Criticism," *JEGP* 16. (1917). 153-63.

[49] "We who live in the days of writing by rule, are apt to try every composition by those laws which we have been taught to think the sole criterion of excellence. Critical taste is universally diffused, and we require the same order and design which

his situation, and circumstances; that so we may be the better enabled to judge and discern how his turn of thinking, and manners of composing were biass'd, influenc'd, and, as it were, tinctur'd, by very familiar and reigning appearances, which are utterly different from those with which we are at present surrounded. For want of this caution, too many readers view the knights and damsels, the turnaments and enchantments of Spenser with modern eyes, never considering that the encounters of Chivalry subsisted in our author's age . . .; that romances were then most eagerly and universally read; and that thus, Spenser from the fashion of his age, was naturally dispos'd to undertake a recital of chivalrous atchievements, and to become, in short, a ROMANTIC POET.[50]

And he then proceeds to apply this same method to show that Spenser's allegory was largely an outgrowth of the literature the poet knew, moralities, pageants, and masques. In another place he explains an expression by reference to Elizabethan customs and adds: "... we may observe, from this passage, how much of their force and propriety both expressions and descriptions must necessarily lose, when the objects, or customs, or manners, to which they allude, are out of use, and forgotten." [51] These, unlike the first quotation, which has nothing to do with learning, present a definite program and presuppose the antiquarian learning of which Warton was making excellent use. There is no need to seek foreign sources for this doctrine, for it is derived not from criticism, but from the practical application of research. England itself had supplied sufficient models, and the historical method of scholarship, moreover, contains inherent within itself this critical attitude. When a scholar discovers a source or recognizes an outmoded literary convention, he must eventually come to the conclusion that this literature is not to be judged entirely by personal tastes and certainly not by canons designed for a different race and age, but by "the writer's situation and circumstances." Warton's is the first decisive statement of a definite program, but certainly most scholarship since Theobald had been devoted to making this point of view possible by antiquarian research to explain conventions, allusions, and meanings; and the

every modern performance is expected to have, in poems where they never were regarded or intended" (*Observations on the Faerie Queene of Spenser*, London, 1762, 1.15).

[50] *Ibid.*, 1754 ed., p. 217.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 290.

scholars themselves—Theobald, Upton, and Whalley—had frequently made use of the doctrine, while others considerably augmented the means for it by bringing to attention many minor Elizabethans. Warton had little more to do than recognize the importance of this critical attitude and give it a recognizable tag, for he could easily have found all the elements in earlier scholarly treatises. And most of these treatises he knew well; Upton, for example, is constantly referred to in the *Observations*, and there is mention of Newton and Theobald. Warton is not an isolated phenomenon; he is part of a normal development that began in England when a practical method of scholarship was borrowed from editors of the classics for application to native products.

The importance of this new point of view, rapidly gaining significance as it did in the hands of successive scholars, can hardly be over-emphasized. The Augustans imposed upon the major Elizabethans, however awkwardly, an unwarranted conformity with neo-classic doctrines and by this means approved or rejected. This practice manifested itself in many ways: in the adaptation of Elizabethan plays, in the silent alterations of republished texts, and in the discovery of a surprising harmony between certain Elizabethan masterpieces and the rules. For example, Gildon insisted that " without an Appeal to these very Rules, *Shakespear* himself is not to be distinguish'd from the most worthless Pretenders, who have often met with an undeserv'd Applause, and challenge the Titles of Great Poets from their Success." [52] This was exactly the critical attitude that the scholars were attacking in their attempts to recreate through their researches the older milieux. The early eighteenth century had weighed the Elizabethans by contemporary standards and consequently had frequently found them wanting; to a large extent the later neo-classicists were trying to weigh them by the original standards and consequently were growing more appreciative.

To continue the review of the progress made by the pre-Wartonian scholars. We have already noted how from 1733 to 1754 the stock of minor Elizabethans again brought to light was rapidly expanding. Warton's knowledge, which is of course

[52] *Works of Shakespeare*, London, 1710. 7. viii.

not entirely revealed by the notes in his *Observations*, is not strikingly larger than that indicated in Grey's work which appeared in the same year. Much of Warton's reading was in mediaeval literature, with which we are not directly concerned here, but he also made use of Harrington's Ariosto and *Epigrams*, Drayton's *Polyolbion* and *Barons Wars*, Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie*, Marston's satires, an Elizabethan romance called *The Red-Rose Knight*, Phineas Fletcher's *Purple Island*, Ascham's *Schoolemaster*, Gosson's *School of Abuse*, Jonson's plays, masques, poems, and prose, Sir Thomas More's English works, the poetry of Wyatt and Surrey, Bishop Hall, and Turberville, Sidney's prose and poetry, the chronicles of Stow and Holingshed, *Gorboduc*, Gascoigne's poems and plays, R. Niccols' *The Cuckow*, Hawes' *Pastime of Pleasure*, Henry Iden's translation of Gelli's *Circe*, Daniel's sonnets, Prynne's *Histriomastix*, Warner's *Albion's England*, John Lane's manuscript poem in imitation of Chaucer, and W. Rowland's *The Letting of Blood in the Head-Vaine*, the products of Skelton, Sir David Lindsay, and William Dunbar, Davies' *Nosce Teipsum*, and *The Mirror for Magistrates*.[53] What is striking, however, is not the length of this list or the nature of the items, but the attitude that Warton displays toward some of these works. As we have seen, most of the earlier scholars were little concerned with the aesthetic value of their secondary material, or, if they voiced any opinion, it was usually a distinctly unfavorable one. Whalley, it is true, praised Hall highly, but his interest was mainly a neo-classic one. Warton, on the other hand, was by temperament better fitted to appreciate this sort of literature; and he was frequently led into an appreciation for an Elizabethan work for the same reason that he was attracted to mediaeval material, that is, because it was fresh, stirring, and unsophisticated. The reading of romances, which lay behind much literature of Elizabethan's reign, was, he wrote, "the source from which young readers especially, in the age of fiction and fancy, *nourished the* SUBLIME."[54] Gas-

[53] Warton was constantly expanding his reading, and in the 1762 edition of the *Observations* there are additional references to Drayton's *Heroical Epistles* and *Moon-Calf*, Jonson's conversations with Drummond, the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals*, Googe's *Eglogs*, Fulke Greville's poetry, Raleigh's prose, Wither's poetry, and Davison's *Poetical Rhapsody*.

[54] *Ibid.*, 1762 ed., 1. 188.

coigne is praised for "smoothness and harmony of versification"; his poem "In Praise of Lady Bridges" for its "delicacy"; and his *Jocasta* for its "strength and harmony" and for "the poetical spirit of Spenser" that it reveals.[55] Fletcher's *Purple Island* is too anatomical and metaphysical, but with it allegory appeared again "in its native splendor," and it is excellent in its personifications of the passions and in its "very pleasing pastoral touches."[56] This encomium is merely tepid, but Warton was not an iconoclast, and it is probable that his conversations were more radical than his writings. When he came to make a public statement of his attitude toward the entire body of earlier material, he was as orthodox as his most reactionary contemporary. After informing the reader that he had read Spenser's "contemporary writers and examined the books on which the peculiarities of his style, taste, and composition, are confessedly founded," he adds apologetically, "I fear I shall be censured for quoting too many pieces of this sort."[57] The only excuse he can make for these minor figures is that they are instrumental in explaining Spenser. Certainly, however, the more appreciative passages quoted above do show his tendency to enjoy Elizabethan literature, and there is evidence indicating that others were aroused by his criticisms to appreciate these poets even more deeply and to attempt a popular revival of them. Later, in his *History*, Warton himself was to be more outspoken in his own critical appreciation.

In his *Observations*, Warton was furthering the work of the earlier scholars in making Elizabethan products understandable by explaining meanings, allusions, and conventions. But more significant than this is his brief sketch of the history of English poetry in this work. Elizabethan literature becomes more understandable as a unit and gains significance when placed in its historical perspective, for literature is then seen not as a progressive development reaching a climax in the Augustan period, but as a series of mutations; and it then becomes the tendency of the historian to present the Elizabethan period as one of the literary peaks. Upton had already given a very brief historical account which represented the Elizabethan age as an aesthetic triumph and the following periods

[55] *Ibid.*, 1754 ed., pp. 268-9 n. [56] *Ibid.*, p. 236 and n. [57] *Ibid.*, 1762 ed., 2. 264.

as a decline. Warton's purpose in his historical sketch is to trace the development of poetical allegory, but the sketch becomes a very brief literary history to about 1633. He holds no brief for the Elizabethans, but his attitude is clearly implied by what he says of the Restoration. He traces poetical allegory through its successive stages and improvements to Fletcher's *Purple Island*, 1633,

> when a poetry succeeded in which imagination gave way to correctness; sublimity of description to delicacy of sentiment, and striking imagery. Poets began now to be more attentive to words, than things and objects; and a manner of expressing a thought prettily, was more regarded than that of conceiving one nobly. The Muses were debauch'd at court, and life and manners became their themes.[58]

Contact with earlier literature was frequently leading to a deflation of the Augustan Age, and it becomes clear that Warton's sympathies were largely with the Elizabethans.

The importance of Warton in the Revival, then, lies not in his originality, for he had been anticipated in almost every respect by the earlier scholars. Moreover, most of Warton's ideas are confused, for, as Professor Havens has shown,[59] he adopted a confusing critical dualism and straddled almost every question of importance. Part of this was the result of adolescence, but part was the outcome of his willingness to accept (at least for the purposes of publication) contemporary critical standards at the same time that his factual investigations and the material he inherited from previous scholars were opening new critical avenues for him. Yet, the part Warton played was vital to the Revival. First of all, he saw more clearly than his predecessors. Those before him had fallen into the historical point of view, but Warton both documented it and employed it consciously and consistently; coming as he did after much antecedent research by others, he was naturally able to view the doctrine more comprehensively. Earlier scholars had brought many Elizabethan figures to the surface; Warton put them to a more intimate use than merely that of explain-

[58] *Ibid.*, 1754 ed., p. 237.

[59] R. D. Havens, "Thomas Warton and the Eighteenth-Century Dilemma," *SP* 25 (1928). 36-50.

ing the meaning of passages in the better-known Elizabethans. Moreover, Warton revealed a full and clear knowledge of the historical development of literature and consequently could be more exact in his critical generalizations. Secondly, Warton's personal reputation did much to popularize scholarship and, later, to inspire in his friends, students, and associates an affection for the Elizabethan products that he had brought to their attention. As evidence of his reputation, the *Monthly Reveiw* critic could find nothing of value in Grey's *Notes on Shakespeare*,[60] but the review of Warton's *Observations* in the next issue of the same periodical speaks respectfully of "Mr. *Warton's* intimacy with our most antique poets" and his "right to criticize."[61] And out of this reputation was to come the first popular interest in Elizabethan literature.

Meanwhile, another stream, contributory to the Revival, had been gradually associating itself with scholarship. The Elizabethan drama had remained known through the century almost solely by theatre circles, which treated the material somewhat like the holdings of a closed corporation. The general public was almost completely ignorant of the minor Elizabethan plays, and the dramatists, though constantly adapting these plays and borrowing from them, seldom indicated their sources or even thought it necessary to do so. But most of the dramatists themselves were by no means unacquainted with the Elizabethan drama, and the memory of it was consequently perpetuated in their hands. Through Dodsley and then Garrick this field came to the attention of the public; and through Garrick the dramatic interest became associated with the scholarly movement.

It is difficult to determine what induced Dodsley in 1744 to publish his twelve volumes of Jacobean and Elizabethan plays. He was intimately concerned with the stage and had written a number of successful plays. His interest, however, was not primarily in the literary value of these pieces, but in the perpetuation of the materials out of which the native drama had grown. Apparently he had greater respect for the Age of Elizabeth than had most of his contemporaries, for he speaks of it as a time which "afforded better models for stile and compo-

[60] *Monthly Review* 11 (1754). 80. [61] *Ibid.*, pp. 120, 112.

sition, than almost any since." But it is equally evident that he was not presenting the plays as intrinsically valuable literature. For example after severely attacking Lyly's prose style, he adds, " His Plays are of the same strain, as may be seen by that I have preserved." He looked upon a few of the items as " not unworthy the present, nor indeed any stage," but the most he hoped for his collection was that it would give " satisfaction to the curious." [62] The reason for the edition becomes more understandable when we recall that much of the material had not been forgotten by the dramatists and that in the '40's renewed popular and scholarly interest in the major Elizabethans was taking root. A series of editions of Shakespeare's plays had been appearing, and Shakespeare's romantic comedies were again attracting favor on the stage after having long been shelved. It was likewise at this time that the dramatists were turning more frequently to Elizabethan plays for material.[63] And the same influence that led to David Garrick's efforts in the same year, amidst a continuous tradition of adaptations, to approximate the original text of *Macbeth* as closely as the stage and the times would permit was probably similar to that which instigated Dodsley's edition.

Through Garrick, Dodsley's dramatic and semi-scholarly interest in the earlier plays was continued, and Garrick's tremendous popularity, which began with his first appearance in 1741, was influential in turning public attention to the earlier plays. But Garrick's preoccupation with the earlier drama and his earnest efforts to supply the public with as much of the original Shakespeare as the stage would permit cannot be explained entirely by reference to the temper of the times. His attempts to present the dramatist's plays altered only by excisions instead of adapted by neo-classic rewriting came in the '40's, in the midst of much scholarly work on the original text and many requests that the theatre revive the unaltered plays. Most of these requests came from scholars who, through familiarity, were finding the originals more captivating than the adapted forms. We have already had occasion to note the

[62] *Select Collection of Old Plays,* ed. Isaac Reed, London, 1780. 1. lxx, lxix, xlvi-xlvii, xlvii n.

[63] See the very incomplete, yet extensive, lists in Allardyce Nicoll's *History of Late Eighteenth Century Drama,* Cambridge, 1927.

demands of Upton and Seward.[64] Garrick's efforts to divest the plays of their neo-classic fittings seem, then, to reflect particularly the tastes and ideas of the increasing number of scholars rather than the views of the theatre-goers. There is other evidence that Garrick's interests were to some extent contingent upon scholarly activities. In 1759, when he decided to revive *Antony and Cleopatra*, it was not to a practiced dramatist that he turned for the preparations, but to the scholar Edward Capell, who had been using his library for his Elizabethan researches. Garrick, in turn, was instrumental in fashioning the ideas of other professional dramatists. It was under Garrick's training, for instance, that Colman produced his *Critical Reflections on the Old English Dramatists* and adapted Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* in his master's manner, specifically making no claim to giving the play "the Air of a modern Performance." But Garrick also brought much of importance to the scholars actively engaged in the Revival. Intimately concerned with the Elizabethan plays and considering acting not only a profession but also a business, he began to collect a library of old plays as part of his professional equipment. The details of his purchases are obscure, but after the middle of the century his collection had achieved an extensive reputation. It was at this time that many of the important figures were turning to scholarship, and Garrick, through his extensive friendships, quickly aligned himself with antiquarian interests and frequently put his valuable library to the use of such scholars as Capell, Steevens, Reed, and Hawkins. Moreover, many such as Tom Davies and Richard Warner looked upon Garrick as the patron of all Elizabethan studies. As a friend of Warton and a member of Johnson's Club, Garrick must have been influential in creating an interest in the older drama. Thus the continued attention on the part of the theatres to the earlier drama was made more pronounced by scholarship and, in turn, nourished and became associated with the scholarly interests.

We have now traced to the mid-century the development of the Revival within scholarship, and the tide that arose with Theobald was now widening and growing fuller. Peter Whalley's earlier interest finally expressed itself in a scholarly edi-

[64] See above pp. 217, 226.

tion of Ben Jonson in 1756, and Upton's in an edition of Spenser in 1758. In 1758 also appeared Ralph Church's edition of Spenser. All of these works reveal a steadily growing knowledge of the minor Elizabethans and an application of this knowledge for a better understanding of the poets edited. Meanwhile, such men as Hurd and John Bowle [65] were revealing an extensive knowledge of Elizabethan literature that was soon to become an appreciation for this literature and a desire to popularize it. These scholars were associated with the Warton-Johnson-Garrick group; and in the second half of the century these men and their associates and students, such as Percy, Tom Davies, Henry Headley, Thomas Hawkins, and Waldron, were to find the minor Elizabethans, as well as the major, not only valuable as scholarly material, but also worthy of critical attention and popular revival.[66] That the course we have charted was the route of the Revival was pointed out as long ago as 1790 by Isaac Reed in his edition of Dodsley's collection of minor Elizabethan plays. As one who saw with unusual clarity the progress of a contemporary movement, let him speak in his own words:

> At a time when destruction seemed to threaten most of the productions of the early stage, and after, it is to be feared, many of them were irrecoverably lost, the explanation of those writers, who may be esteemed the classics of this country, began to engage the attention of some of the ablest writers of the present times. Struck with the absurd alterations and wild conjectures of critics, who mangled and disfigured their authors, instead of elucidating their obscurity, they determined to search into contemporary writers for a solution of such doubts as had been created chiefly by time. The success which attended their enquiries soon showed the necessity of an acquaintance with works which had until then been overlooked, to obtain a perfect knowledge of some of our most esteemed authors. It showed also, that many beauties had long remained unknown and unnoticed; that fame had not always accompanied worth; and that those who wished for information concerning ancient manners would not be able to obtain it so well from any other sources.[67]

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[65] See [Richard Hurd], *A Letter to Mr. Mason,* Cambridge, 1757 and [John Bowle], *Reflections on Originality in Authors,* London, 1766.

[66] The present writer is preparing a study of this second stage of the Elizabethan Revival.

[67] Dodsley's *Select Collection of Old Plays,* ed. Isaac Reed, London, 1780. 1. xi-xii.

VITA

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